



How to Trace Hungarian Ancestors

If you have ancestors who lived in the area that is present-day Hungary, you usually only need access to two historical record collections to successfully trace your family lines back to the early 1800s and possibly further. These are civil registration records and church registers.

I. CIVIL REGISTRATION RECORDS (BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS)

Beginning in 1895, the government began requiring the registration of births, marriages, and deaths at civil registry offices. FamilySearch has a large collection of Hungarian civil registration records from all present-day counties except Pest County. This collection consists of 1) microfilmed records which have now been scanned to digital images, and 2) records that were captured with a digital camera. All of the images that came from microfilm are published online at [FamilySearch.org](https://familysearch.org); many of the images captured with a digital camera are also online, but there are some that have not yet been published. The published records can be found in a browsable collection on [FamilySearch.org](https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1452460): <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1452460>. (Click **Browse through 5,864,285 images.**)

Civil registration records are currently being indexed. On the webpage for the civil registration collection (<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1452460>), there is an option to search the indexes. However, the number of indexed records (year-to-date) is 316,184 out of 5.9 million. So, right now the chances of finding your ancestor using the indexes is not very good.

I. CHURCH REGISTERS (BAPTISMS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS)

From about the 1700s until the present, religious bodies kept registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths in Hungary. Close to 100% of church registers for all religious denominations in Hungary were microfilmed to the year 1895 by FamilySearch. These microfilms can be viewed at your local Family History Center. They are not available online.

Many baptism registers from the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church were indexed by FamilySearch, and the indexes can be searched online at [FamilySearch.org](https://familysearch.org): <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1743180> and <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1858355>. If you find your ancestor in the index, the original record can then be quickly found on the microfilm. Using the indexes can save you time, but be careful because not all registers were indexed, and sometimes names were indexed incorrectly.

Sometimes small villages did not have their own parish church. Use a gazetteer to identify which parish your ancestors belonged to in order to identify the correct microfilms to search. The 1877 (Dvorzsák) gazetteer of Hungary is available online at [FamilySearch.org](https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/163772?availability=Family%20History%20Library): <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/163772?availability=Family%20History%20Library>. (Below the Notes section, click **here.**) There is also an electronic, derivative version of this gazetteer online: <http://www.radixhub.com/radixhub/gazetteers/1877>.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

The most common research strategy for tracing Hungarian ancestors in civil registration records and church registers is the following:

1. Find your ancestor's birth or baptism record. This gives his/her parents' names.
2. Find all the other children of that couple in the birth or baptism registers.
3. Search for the couple's marriage record, based on their first child's birth year. In many cases, their marriage record gives the ages of the bride and groom, and their parents' names.
4. Based on the information in the marriage record, locate the bride's and groom's birth or baptism record, and start again with step #1.
5. Depending on the situation, you may also want to search the death records for some of your ancestors. Death records often give the age of the deceased, spouse's name, and parent names.